

hopes have been dashed. The last few months have been their own tidy case study in what kind of global actor the so-called People's Republic has chosen to be.

Their response to the coronavirus pandemic that started in their own country was to silence their own doctors, imprison their own people, shut down important research, and lie to the rest of the world while hoarding supplies for themselves. The CCP's selfishness and failures fueled a worldwide catastrophe, and, ever since, they have tried to use that catastrophe as a smokescreen for other aggression.

While they thought the rest of the world was distracted, China has cracked down on Hong Kong; conducted provocative military exercises near Taiwan; expanded its bullying into the South China Sea; pressured the Philippines; and literally initiated physical fighting with India in the Himalayas.

Oh, and according to press reports, China has also found the time to mount online disinformation campaigns to hurt America and divide us among ourselves. Bad actors linked to Beijing have reportedly flooded Twitter to exploit the death of George Floyd and increase hostility among Americans. Even in official channels, CCP leaders mock America and imply our society is no better than their tyranny.

Now, as an aside, some Democrats here in Washington seem to have swallowed the Chinese propaganda and set out to amplify it themselves, including from right here on the Senate floor.

Yesterday, right here in the Senate Chamber, the Democratic leader explicitly compared America men and women in uniform to the Chinese murderers who committed the massacre in Tiananmen Square. Leader SCHUMER said that, when he saw images of American men and women in uniform standing near the recently defaced Lincoln Memorial and protecting the right to peaceful protest, "You cannot help but think of Tiananmen Square." That is what he said.

I am sure Beijing was thrilled with this shameful comparison. A propaganda victory for Communist China, gift-wrapped with the compliments of the Democratic Party, delivered just in time for this bloody anniversary.

Imagine being so consumed by partisanship that you deliberately link the brave American men and women who stop violence, protect peaceful protests, defend citizens' constitutional liberties, and defend against violent riots to the Chinese butchers who gunned down crowds of peaceful dissenters who were begging for the same rights our military defends.

In America, the police help peaceful marchers march. Over there, they gun them down. If anyone is having trouble distinguishing these things, the problem is not with our Nation—it is with them.

Now, these recent examples of Chinese hostility are just symptoms of a

fundamental problem that has come into focus. Decades ago, the United States and the rest of the world made a calculated bet that welcoming China into the fold would cause it to mend its ways.

It was 20 years ago that President Clinton argued for admitting China into the WTO because "economic innovation and political empowerment . . . will inevitably go hand in hand." Many smart people made that wager—in both parties—but we should never have used words like "inevitable."

President Clinton also said: "China has been trying to crack down on the internet. . . . Good luck!" Back in the year 2000, the transcript says, that was greeted with laughter. Well, no one is laughing now.

China's leaders have pounced on every inch of economic space the world has afforded them—and then some. They have cheated on trade and have stolen foreign technology. They have executed on long-term plans to dominate key global industries. They have weaponized foreign aid to bring developing countries under their thrall. So the Chinese economy has leapt forward. The Chinese people enjoy greater prosperity, which they sorely need after decades of Communist mismanagement, but all of this money and innovation have not brought the people any more freedom. They have given CCP elites better high-tech tools with which to oppress their own people and more leverage with which to undermine the international system.

Rather than importing liberty into China, this economic integration seems to have been rather more successful at exporting its authoritarian preferences to the rest of us. Right here in the United States, we have seen Hollywood make a gross habit of self-censoring films to avoid offending the Chinese Communist Party. We have seen the NBA prioritize its profits in China and throw an employee under the bus who spoke out for Hong Kong. The same elites, institutions, and businesses that feel totally free to critique our own society—and rightly so—increasingly walk on eggshells around President Xi and his cronies.

And free speech is hardly the only front where China poses an international threat. A recent major report from an interagency task force found that China's deliberate economic aggression and targeting of our industrial base is a significant national security vulnerability for the United States, and many other nations are awakening to that same reality.

Back in March, a CCP-controlled newspaper threatened to cut off pharmaceutical exports to the United States and "plunge" Americans "into the mighty sea of coronavirus" if we did not play more nicely with Beijing. One month later, Chinese officials threatened a boycott of Australia because our Australian friends wanted to investigate the origins of the pandemic.

Earlier this year, the Director of the FBI explained that China's criminal conspiracies against the United States and our companies make the CCP the "greatest long-term threat" to America's information security, intellectual property, and, by extension, our "economic vitality." Once again, our allies and partners are being victimized by the very same tactics.

One outside report found that the "United States is losing between \$400 billion and \$600 billion per year in intellectual property theft as a matter of provable losses, and that figure does not account for second-order losses such as jobs and infrastructure." Let's put that in perspective. Congress has been working hard on the huge, historic Paycheck Protection Program. It has pushed out a half a trillion dollars for American workers. Well, by this estimate, China reaches into our country and steals the equivalent of that entire program every single year.

China does not play by the rules, not in Hong Kong, not in the WHO, not in the WTO, not in international trade. Year after year, on issue over issue, it has chosen the path of aggression. So there will be consequences.

Just this week, the U.K. is reportedly continuing to back away from plans to work with Huawei, and Prime Minister Boris Johnson is impressively preparing to offer visas so that Hongkongers who want to know their freedoms and liberties are secure can take refuge in the United Kingdom instead. In Japan, Prime Minister Abe is taking major steps to strengthen Japan and check China's economic aggression. It is a good thing, too, because defending American security, American interests, American prosperity, and the international system cannot be a go-it-alone operation.

There will be steps the United States will take on our own, but just as the entire free world stands united today to remember Tiananmen Square, so we will need to stand together to prevent the world's public square from heading toward a similar domination by China. We will need to keep our friends and partners close. China can try to repress its own people, but the United States of America will never fall silent. We will never go dark. We will keep the candles lit. We will protect our people and their bright future.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.